

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

KNOWING JESUS CHRIST IN THE EUCHARIST...

I heard a story about an older nun who was living near a construction site. Sister noticed the coarse language of the workers and decided to spend some time trying to correct their ways. She decided that one day she would take her lunch, sit with the workers, and talk to them. Sister put a sandwich in a brown bag and walked over to the spot where the men were eating.

Sporting a big smile, she walked up to the group and asked, "Do you men know Jesus Christ?" They shook their heads and looked at each other very confused. One of the workers looked up into the steelworkers and yelled out, "Anybody up there know Jesus Christ?" One of the workers yelled down, "Yeah, why?" Came the reply: "His wife's here with his lunch."

The thought came to mind: How do we know Jesus Christ?" Oh, we could read a book on his life which might prove inspiring. Then again, we have the four gospels which really hand on to us what the Lord did when he was on this earth in his humanity. Reading them we come to know all about Jesus and his teaching.

However, the best thing for us to do in order to know Jesus better is to receive his body and blood in Holy Communion. This Sunday we celebrate a special feast in honor of the Holy Eucharist. In Latin, the name of this feast is called "Corpus Christi"-the Body of Christ. I suppose the Holy Eucharist is something that we take for granted as Catholics. We become so accustomed to the most sublime realities that we don't appreciate the great gift that is ours as Catholics.

Sometimes when I speak to some of the CCD children here at Saint Charles, I ask them what they receive in communion. Invariably, one kid (or even several) will say: "The bread!" But the Eucharist is much more than just a piece of bread or a sip of wine. Rather, it is what we call "The Real Presence" of Christ with us in the altar.

We can look at the Sacrament of the Eucharist from two angles. First, it is a sacred banquet. Remember, that our Lord instituted it at the Last Supper. He spoke about himself as "The Living Bread come down from Heaven" for a person to eat and never die. Yes, the Eucharist becomes our food. When we receive Holy Communion worthily, Christ dwells within us and we should pray to the Divine Lord abiding in us. We can speak to him and converse with him as a friend.

Secondly, the Holy Eucharist is a real sacrifice. In the sacrifice of the Mass, Jesus offers himself in an un-bloody manner. On the cross on the First Good Friday, the Lord Jesus in his human body died for our sins. On the altar at Mass, the priest says over bread and wine: "This is my body given for you... my blood which will be shed for you." In a mystical way, the sacrifice of Calvary is "re-presented" if you will.

The Mass is the greatest of all prayers and through it, we come to know in a special way the love of God for us. Also, the Holy Eucharist remains in the tabernacle after Mass so that we might always come to Him and enjoy His presence among us. The best way to know a person better is to spend time with them. The same could be said about our relationship with the Lord.

Let us give the Lord one hour a week at Mass and receive Holy Communion. If we can, let's come to the Church and pray before the tabernacle or make a holy hour in the chapel. These are excellent ways to not just know about Jesus Christ, but really come to know him.. Personally. On this Feast of Corpus Christi, let us be more grateful for the "Bread of the Angels."

*Sincerely in Christ,
Father Jerome*